

Oasis® 101, Oasis® 102, and Oasis® 111 (all available from Technical Absorbents, UK). The Fiberdri® 1161 and 1241 fibers have a diameter around 20 microns and a length around two centimeters. Some other types of Fiberdri® superabsorbent fibers have a length around four centimeters.

In The Claims:

Please cancel Claims 8, 9 and 20 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A method of making a permanently wettable superabsorbent material, comprising:

treating the superabsorbent material with a surfactant solution;

binding the surfactant to the surface of the superabsorbent material; and

wherein the surfactant has at least one first functional group reactive with a second functional group on the surface of the superabsorbent material, and at least one non-reactive and hydrophilic functional group; and

wherein the surfactant is applied to the superabsorbent material when the surface of the superabsorbent material is activated by increasing the amount of second functional groups available to react at the surface of the superabsorbent material,

wherein the superabsorbent material has a dimension that is less than about 1000 microns for particulate superabsorbents, or less than about 300 microns in diameter for fibrous superabsorbents.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the surfactant solution includes a solvent that is a solvent to the surfactant but a non-solvent to the superabsorbent material; and

wherein the surfactant solution includes an amount of water sufficient to activate the surface of the superabsorbent material to promote reaction between the first and the second functional groups on the surface of the superabsorbent material.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising washing the treated superabsorbent material with a solvent to selectively remove any fugitive surfactant.

10. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the treated superabsorbent material is a fiber that has a floating time less than 30 seconds and causes a reduction in surface tension of saline less than about 30%.

11. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the treated superabsorbent material is a fiber that causes a reduction in surface tension of saline less than about 25%.

12. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the treated superabsorbent material is a fiber that causes a reduction in surface tension of saline less than about 20%.

21. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the surfactant is applied to the superabsorbent material when the surface of the superabsorbent material is sufficiently solvated to promote reaction between the first and the second functional groups on the surface of the superabsorbent material.

Please add the following new claims:

22. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the surfactant is lauryldimethylamine oxide.

23. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein the superabsorbent material comprises a cross-linked copolymer formed from isobutylene and maleic anhydride.